

JUN 10 1965

Sanitized - Approved For Release : CIA-RDP75-00149R000200320028-8

STATINTL

Dodd Says Viet Nam War Could Be Lost Here in U.S.

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Sen. Thomas J. Dodd, D-Conn., today warned that the Vietnamese struggle could be lost on the home front.

Dodd assailed "a noisy minority" favoring withdrawal from Viet Nam as ill-informed about conditions in that country. He said it also was ill-informed about the support there and in other Far Eastern countries for American policies.

In a speech prepared for the Senate, he also criticized the American press for what he called its "inadequacy" in reporting the Vietnamese war and in giving an unbalanced picture of the opposition to the administration's policies regarding Viet Nam.

Asks Fact-Finding Mission

He said he had written Sen. J. William Fulbright, D-Ark., chairman of the Senate Foreign Relations Committee, urging him to send a bipartisan fact-finding mission to Viet Nam as soon as practical to develop all the facts about conditions in Viet Nam and the opposition of the people there to Communist rule.

"If the war in Viet Nam could be determined by the will to resist of the Vietnamese people, or by the morale and dedication of our own armed forces," Dodd said, "there would be no reason for misgivings about the outcome of this historic struggle."

"Months of Testing"

The Connecticut senator warned, however, that "the outcome of the Vietnamese war may very well be determined not on the field of battle in South Viet Nam but on . . . the domestic front in the United States, and particularly in Washington."

He said he was convinced that with American assistance the Vietnamese people ultimately could win their struggle against Communist aggressors.

"The coming months will be months of testing," Dodd told the Senate.

"There will be many costly battles. There will be victories—but there will also be defeats. And, because American forces are now involved on a larger scale in the actual fighting, the chances are that American casualties will run much heavier than they have since large-scale fighting first erupted in Viet Nam in 1961."

Sees Reds Bolstered

With regard to the critics of the administration's policies and those urging a withdrawal from Viet Nam, Dodd said:

"President Johnson will not be deterred from his course by this minority. But by encouraging the Viet Cong to believe the administration will be compelled to capitulate to their so-called public opinion, those who urge withdrawal are in practice doing more than any other group to frustrate the very objectives in whose name they profess to speak."

Dodd's criticism of the press and its coverage of the war was similar to what he voiced in a recent speech in Cleveland. Dodd said he believed the overwhelming majority of the American correspondents in Viet Nam are competent and conscientious reporters who are trying their best under difficult circumstances.

Pictures Singled Out

"But the hard fact remains that, taken in its totality, American press coverage of Viet Nam has created a public image of a

situation in that country that is in certain respects inaccurate, in other respects imbalanced, in still other respects grossly inadequate or even blank," Dodd said.

Dodd said stories and pictures on Viet Cong prisoners being tortured or maltreated by their Vietnamese captors in an effort to extract information from them gave a distorted view because Viet Cong atrocities have not been fully reported.

"Nowhere in the press have I seen it pointed out that Viet Cong units have made it a frequent practice to disembowel and otherwise mutilate the bodies of their victims," Dodd said. "Nor have I seen any reference to the fact that even American soldiers killed in action there have had their bodies gruesomely mutilated by the Viet Cong."

Dodd said he could not insist too strongly that if American people and other peoples of the free world are to have a clearer understanding of the nature of the war in Viet Nam than they have today it is "imperative that the American press corps make more effort than it has heretofore to bring the facts about the Viet Cong terror in the country side to light."

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